AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-25 are pending in the instant application. Claim 12 has been amended. The Applicant requests reconsideration of the claims in view of the following amendments reflected in the listing of claims.

Listing of claims:

1.   (Previously Presented) A method for providing blade server load balancing using spare link bandwidth in a multi-server platform having a common backplane, comprising:

receiving digital information on a digital communications link at a blade server manager;

receiving capacity utilization information embedded in spare link bandwidth from a plurality of blade servers operably coupled to the blade server manager;

selecting a blade server to receive said digital information based on the received capacity utilization information; and

forwarding the received digital information to the selected blade server.

2.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said embedded capacity utilization information is data representing blade server CPU percent utilization.

3.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 1, wherein said embedded capacity utilization information is data representing blade server interrupt utilization.

4.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 1, wherein the blade server manager is operably coupled to an Ethernet network.

5.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 1, wherein the blade server manager is operably coupled to an external network.

6.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 1, wherein the blade server manager is operably coupled to an external network at a link data rate of 10 Gigabits per second.

7.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 1, wherein the blade server manager communicates with each blade server over a dedicated link.

8.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 7, wherein the data rate of the dedicated link is 1 Gigabit/second.

9.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 1, wherein the blade server utilization information is embedded in frame alignment information.

10.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 9, wherein the embedded capacity information is represented with at least two symbols.

11.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 9, wherein the embedded capacity information is represented with expanded control characters.

12.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the selecting is based on a load balancing algorithm.

13.   (Previously Presented)   A blade server with load balancing using spare link bandwidth, comprising:

a server including a blade server manager, two or more blade servers, and a common backplane;

a network interface for communicating with an external network; and

two or more blade server interfaces for communicating between the blade server manager and each blade server,

wherein said blade server manager allocates data received from said external network to each blade server based on embedded capacity utilization

data transmitted by each blade server to the blade server manager that is embedded in spare link bandwidth on said interface between the blade server manager and each of said blade servers.

14.   (Previously Presented) The system of claim 13, wherein said embedded capacity utilization data information is data representing blade server CPU percent utilization.

15.   (Previously Presented) The system of claim 13, wherein said embedded capacity utilization data represents blade server interrupt utilization.

16.   (Previously Presented)   The system of claim 13, wherein the blade server manager is operably coupled to an Ethernet network.

17.   (Previously Presented)   The system of claim 13, wherein the blade server manager is operably coupled to an external TCP/IP network.

18.   (Previously Presented)   The system of claim 13, wherein the blade server manager is operably coupled to an external network with a communications link having a data rate of 10 Gigabits per second.

19.   (Previously Presented) The system of claim 13, wherein the blade server manager communicates with each blade server over a dedicated link having a data rate of 1 Gigabit/second.

20.   (Previously Presented) The system of claim 13, wherein the blade server utilization information is embedded in frame alignment information.

21.   (Previously Presented) The system of claim 13, wherein the embedded capacity information is represented with at least two symbols.

22.   (Previously Presented) The system of claim 13, wherein the embedded capacity information is represented with expanded control characters.

23.   (Previously Presented) The system of claim 13, wherein said blade server allocates data received from said external network to each blade server using a load balancing algorithm, and wherein said load balancing algorithm utilizes said embedded capacity utilization data.

24.   (Previously Presented) The system of claim 13, wherein said capacity utilization data is embedded in an inter packet gap.

25.   (Previously Presented) The system of claim 13, wherein said capacity utilization data is embedded in one or more control words bounding a data word.